

## The Impact of Human Resources Management Practices on Turnover Intention through Intrinsic Motivation: Evidence from the Jordanian Hospitality Industry

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### Abstract

In light of the difficult challenges facing the hospitality industry, actual employee turnover becomes an important issue facing the hospitality industry due to its negative impacts on hotels' performance, sustainability, and growth as well as the failure to satisfy customers' needs. Drawing on the social exchange theory, the present paper is a literature review paper that aims to investigate theoretically the antecedents of employee turnover intention. Some critical research gaps were found through this theoretical investigation. For instance, human resources management practices play a critical role in hotels' success through enhance employees' attitudes and behaviors but lack research existed to identify deeply the impact of these practices on employee turnover intention. Theoretical evidence was found that human resources management practices enhance employee intrinsic motivation which can strongly boost employee loyalty to their organization resulting in decrease employee intention to leave the workplace. In other words, employee intrinsic motivation can play a mediating role between human resources management practices and employee turnover intention.

**Keywords:** Social Exchange Theory, Employee Turnover Intention, Human Resources Management Practices, Intrinsic Motivation, Jordan Hospitality Industry.

### Introduction

Globally, employee turnover, recruiting, and retaining are still critical issues in the hospitality industry because they have a great impact on hotels' sustainability, success, and competitiveness (Alharbi, Abuelhassan, 2020); Kalgin, Podolskiy, Parfenteva, & Campbell, 2018; Li, Kim, & Zhao, 2017; Lim, Loo, & Lee, 2017). Hotels' competitive advantage and their success are a result of employees' positive work attitudes and contributions (Podsakoff & MacKenzie, 1997) has encouraged organizational scholars to understand and clarify the motivational factors to enhance employees' work attitudes and to decrease their intention to quit the organizations (e.g., Aryee, Budhwar, and Chen, 2002; Li, Kim, & Zhao, 2017; Lim, Loo, & Lee, 2017; Zeffan & Bani Melhem, 2017).

In the hospitality industry, employee turnover has long been a major interest of researchers, human resource practitioners and managers because of the high costs related to decrease efficiency and diminish productivity, as well as the costs afforded by having to hire and train newcomers (Li, Kim, & Zhao, 2017; Wan & Chan, 2013; Zeffane & Bani Melhem, 2017). Turnover intention (TI) develops slowly when employees are not satisfied with their jobs or committed to their organization, leading the employees to seek for other job opportunities, and actual turnover will be inevitable if they find a better opportunity (Bufquin, DiPietro, Orłowski, and Partlow, 2017).

Practically, Employee TI is defined as voluntary employees' behavioural intention to quit their workplace due to dissatisfied organizational factors (Chen & Wu, 2017; Li, Bonn, & Ye, 2019). TI as the behavioural intentions illuminating an individual's intention to leave or stay and is

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considered to be the primary antecedent or actual turnover behaviour. Reducing turnover in a newly established organization is particularly important for productivity and to maintain a stable corporate reputation and image. Therefore, knowing turnover's effects are important for organization to allow the problem to be handled wisely and correctly (Kim, 2018; Li et al., 2019).

Previous studies confirmed that Human Resources Management (HRM) practices (Juhdi, Pa'wan, & Hansaram, 2013; SamGnanakkan, 2010) and intrinsic motivation (Galletta, Portoghese, & Battistelli, 2011; Thatcher, Liu, Stepina, Goodman, & Treadway, 2006) have great influence on employee turnover intention. Yet, these studies did not investigate these factors in one model and how these factors can work together.

The role of Human Resource Management (HRM) within an organization is a significant factor in the organization's ability to achieve its organizational goals and objectives, and to develop a sustainable competitive advantage within the firm's marketplace (Abuelhassan & Elsayed, 2020). through developing and enhancing human capital resources' ability, attitudes, behaviours and performance (Domínguez-Falcón, Martín-Santana, & De Saá-Pérez, 2016; Duarte, Gomes, & Neves, 2015). This is achieved via the policies each firm enacts, and the methods it uses to attract and retain the right employees for its needs (Juhdi et al., 2013).

Also, HRM practices refer to all organizational activities dedicated to the management of the pool of human resources as well as ensuring that these resources are employed towards the achievement of organizational goals (Pham, Tučková, & Jabbour, 2019; Veth, Korzilius, Van der Heijden, Emans, & De Lange, 2019). In the current study, the adopted HRM practices include "Recruitment and Selection", "Training and Development", "Compensation", and "Performance Appraisal" (Domínguez-Falcón et al., 2016). HRM practices are responsible to enhance positive employee organizational behaviours and decrease negative ones such as employee turnover intention (Duarte et al., 2015; Innocenti, Pilati, & Peluso, 2011; Long, Perumal, & Ajagbe, 2012) and in this study, HRM practices plays as independent variable for turnover intention. On the other hand, intrinsic motivation plays the mediating mechanism between HRM practices and employee TI.

Intrinsic motivation is defined as to what extent that an employee is internally willing and interested to work for the organization's sake because s/he finds her/his job is very interesting that it is a motivation in itself, very exciting, enjoyable, meaningful, and inspiring (Deci & Ryan, 2010; Kulkarni, Narasimhan, Saeedi, & Tenenbaum, 2016; Alsaadi et al., 2019). Intrinsic motivation is a critical employee motivation in organization because it is greatly associated with employee job satisfaction, turnover intention, affective commitment, performance and creativity (Amabile, 1993; Cho & Perry, 2012; Galletta et al., 2011; Masvaure & Maharaj, 2014; Menges, Tussing, Wihler, & Grant, 2017; Thatcher et al., 2006; Zhang & Bartol, 2010).

### **Jordanian Tourism Sector**

The territorial scope of this research is the Jordanian hotel sector. In recent decades, the Jordanian tourism sector has played an important role in the Kingdom's economy. The Jordanian hotel sector has grown by about seven percent a year since the early 1980s, comprising on average around eleven percent of the gross domestic product (GDP). The Jordanian tourist industry exploits the wide range of tourist attractions and activities that are situated in Jordan with the capacity to increase inbound tourists who are likely to stay in the hotel, such as the Dead Sea, Wadi Rum, religious sites at Mount Nebo and al Mazar, and mosques in Amman and

Madaba. Petra's spectacular Nabatean ruins, Roman theatres, tombs, and monasteries are a major attraction for tourists (Jordanian Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities 2008).

One of the significant reasons that encourage the governments to support and promote tourism throughout the world is its positive impact on the economic growth and development (Cárdenas-García, Sánchez-Rivero, & Pulido-Fernández, 2015; Mazghouni&Goaied, 2015). Tourism generates employment opportunities and income. Tourism leads to a positive balance of payments, stimulates the tourism supply sector and leads to the overall growth of economic activity in the country (Khann a, Papadavid, Tyson, &te Velde, 2016). Therefore, tourism which included hotels and hospitality businesses should have an impact on the frequently economic quantitative measurement used in economic development (Joppe& Li, 2014).

Increasing the employee turnover rate in the Jordanian hotel sector is an emerging problem worthy of consideration. Turnover has to be a major problem and critical issues for management globally. Much attention has been given to the factors that contribute to turnover intention especially toward employee's turnover behavior(Awang et al., 2013). Turnover rates in the tourism sector are higher than in other sectors, mainly due to seasonality. This requires strategies that account for this reality. Besides seasonality, other issues include low salary, and performance, bad relationships with people, or a lack of or insufficient job guarantees and career planning (Aksu, Bahtiyar, Deveci, & Koç, 2016).

In service industries such as the hospitality industry, employee turnover has long been a major interest of researchers, human resource practitioners and managers because of the high costs related to decrease efficiency and diminish productivity, as well as the costs afforded by having to hire and train newcomers (Li, Kim, & Zhao, 2017). Turnover intention develops slowly when employees are not satisfied with their jobs or committed to their organization, leading the employees to seek for other job opportunities, and actual turnover will be inevitable if they find a better opportunity (Bufquin, DiPietro, Orlowski, and Partlow, 2017).

Several previous studies highlighted that HRM practices (Duarte et al., 2015) have a significant role in developing employee turnover intention in many industries. Yet, no empirical studies have investigated these factors together on employee turnover intention in the hospitality industry especially the Jordan hospitality context.

### **Critical Analysis of Previous Related Studies and Research Gap**

It is confirmed that hotels' performance and profitability are heavily detriment by employees' turnover, resulting in the forfeiture of diverse intellectual and financial resources and assets (Akgunduz & Sanli, 2017; Li et al., 2019; Li, Kim, & Zhao, 2017). The main research problem addressed in the current research is employee turnover intention, as it was reported that actual employee turnover is determining the hospitality industry growth and stability in some countries that its incomes are relying on the tourism industry (e.g., Jordan). The specific theoretical problem and hotel business problem addressed is a lack of research investigates the impact of HRM practices and intrinsic motivation on turnover intention in one research model.

Several authors confirmed the importance of HRM practices (Long & Perumal, 2014; Long et al., 2012; SamGnanakkan, 2010), and intrinsic motivation (Dysvik & Kuvaas, 2010; Kim, 2018) in decreasing employee turnover intention. Yet, the impacts of these constructs on employee turnover intention have empirically investigated separately; no existed research has been conducted to include HRM practices, intrinsic motivation, and turnover intention in one model. Furthermore, it was found in these previous studies that HRM practices have significant impacts on turnover intention; these studies didn't indicate how HRM practices can influence negatively

towards employee turnover intention. During reviewing the relationships between these constructs and turnover intention, the researcher found some research gaps which will be discussed below.

Some researchers indicated that the constructs of organizational commitment and trust in organization play the mediating mechanism in the HRM practices – turnover intention relationship but they neglected the importance of employee motivation mechanism as a mediator. For instance, (1) organizational commitment and organizational engagement mediate the relationship between HRM practices and employee turnover (Juhdi et al., 2013), (2) trust in organization mediates the relationship between HRM practices and employee turnover (Hemdi & Nasurdin, 2006), (3) perceived organizational support mediates the relationship between HRM practices and employee turnover (Duarte et al., 2015), and (4) organizational commitment mediates the relationship between HRM practices and employee turnover (SamGnanakkan, 2010).

However, employee motivation (especially intrinsic motivation) is considered as a strong predictor of employee turnover intention (Dysvik & Kuvaas, 2010; Kim, 2018), the past studies have neglected the mediating role of intrinsic motivation between the independent variables of HRM practices and turnover intention. The past research has just only focused on the employees' perceptions of the organizations' behaviours, trust, and support as mediators between these independent variables and turnover intention.

However, past studies have argued that HRM practices (Gagné & Deci, 2005; Kuvaas & Dysvik, 2009) can increase employee intrinsic motivation; scar empirical studies have investigated their impacts on intrinsic motivation. The current study will contribute greatly to the literature of employee turnover intention in the hospitality and service industry through investigating for the first time the direct impact of HRM practise on intrinsic motivation, and the mediating role of intrinsic motivation between HRM practices and TI.

### **The Adopted Theory of the Current Study**

**Social exchange theory** is one of the most important paradigms for comprehending employees' attitudes and behaviours in their workplace (DeConinck, 2010). Social exchange theory relies on two parts relationship when the first part (hotel management in the current study) practices favourable actions - for example, better HRM practices - towards the second part (hotel employees in the current study). That will motivate the second part to reciprocate the first part with positive action (e.g. remain in the workplace) (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005; Eisenberger, Stinglhamber, Vandenberghe, Sucharski, & Rhoades, 2002; Weaver & Trevino, 2001). Several past works has used the social exchange theory in linking HRM practices (Abubakar et al., 2015; Juhdi et al., 2013) to employee turnover intention. Thus, this theory is adopted in the current study.

### **Conceptualization of the research frame-work**

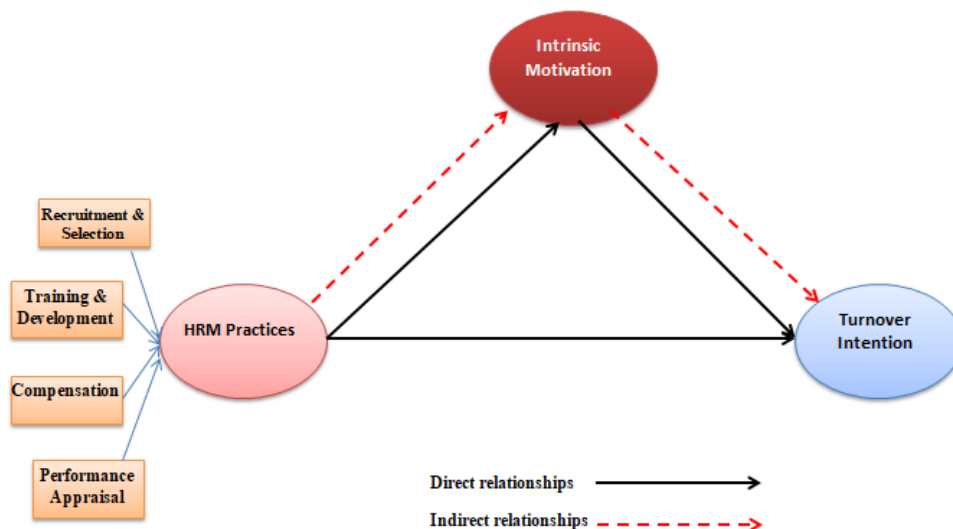
HRM practices are used as organizational tools to form and institutionalize employees' behaviours and attitudes (Alfes, Shantz, Truss, & Soane, 2013; Innocenti et al., 2011), to achieve the organizational goals and objectives (Juhdi et al., 2013). HRM practices that composited of compensation, performance appraisal, career management, selection, and training found to have significant effects in developing employee organizational commitment (Juhdi et al., 2013) which has a strong impact on employee TI (Alkhateri, Abuelhassan, Khalifa, Nusari, & Ameen, 2018). For retaining employees, it is necessary to increase their work motivation and organizational commitment (Galletta et al., 2011), statistically, it was found that better HRM practices boost

employee motivation (Dar, Bashir, Ghazanfar, & Abrar, 2014) and organization commitment (SamGnanakkan, 2010). Moreover, the good HRM practices increase employee perceptions of organizational support whereby decrease their intention to quit the workplace (Duarte et al., 2015).

HRM practices such as investment in employee development through developing and maintaining knowledge, skills, and behaviours which increases employees' value in the organization (Lee & Bruvold, 2003) boosts intrinsically their motivation to show high performance (Kuvaas & Dysvik, 2009). Also, a better performance appraisal system can encourage better performance through intrinsically eliciting employees' motivation (Oh & Lewis, 2009). It is reported that more intrinsically motivated employees are more goal attainment, present greater effort, and more engaged in their jobs (Gagné & Deci, 2005), thus, intrinsically motivated employees are more likely to effectively react to HRM practices which are relying on their discretionary effort and self-managed behaviour (Kuvaas, 2006; Kuvaas & Dysvik, 2010).

The current study suggests that intrinsic motivation plays as mediating mechanism between HRM practices – turnover intention relationship, see Fig1. IM is an extremely important driver for employee outcomes; intrinsically motivated employees present an extensive variety of positive emotions, attitudes, behaviours, performances. In several studies, it was confirmed that intrinsic motivation has a strong negative effect on turnover intention (Cho & Perry, 2012; Galletta et al., 2011; Kim, 2018), because intrinsic motivation acts as the strongest driver of employee attitudes, behaviours and performance (Cho & Perry, 2012; Zhang & Bartol, 2010). Intrinsic motivation is an extremely important driver for employee outcomes, intrinsically motivated employees present a considerable diversity of positive emotions, attitudes, behaviours, performances (Cho & Perry, 2012; Lemyre, Treasure, & Roberts, 2006), as well as it protects employees against negative emotions and stressors (Gagné et al., 2010; Lemyre, Roberts, & Stray-Gundersen, 2007; Ryan & Deci, 2008).

Fig1: Research Framework



Particularly, in prior work, intrinsic motivation had negative relationships with psychological distress and turnover intention; it also found that intrinsic motivation had positive relationships with affective and normative organizational commitment, well-being, self-reported psychological

health, and job satisfaction (Gagné et al., 2010). Moreover, several authors (e.g., Dysvik & Kuvaas, 2008, 2010; Grant & Sonnentag, 2010) confirmed the negative associations between intrinsic motivation and turnover intention, emotional exhaustion, and lower job burnout. Finally, intrinsically motivated employees can manage their organizational behaviour and thus tend to be more able to control and balance their intention to quit the workplace and their work negative associations (Senécal, Vallerand, & Guay, 2001).

One of the important roles of HRM practices is to boost and improve the emotional attachment of employees with their organization which enhances employees' loyalty and dedication to the organization and in turn declines their intention to quit the workplace (Albrecht, Bakker, Gruman, Macey, & Saks, 2015; Alfes et al., 2013; Kadiresan et al., 2015; Snape & Redman, 2010). The current study supposes that HRM practices have an indirect relationship with employee TI through IM. It is well known that HRM through its practices aims to form, develop and enhance employees' attitudes and behaviours to develop highly competitive advantages and meet the organizational goals and objectives which include retaining talented employees (Albrecht et al., 2015; Innocenti et al., 2011; Long et al., 2012). HRM practices play a critical role in motivating employees to achieve the organizational goals and objectives (Albrecht et al., 2015; Domínguez-Falcón, Martín-Santana, & De Saá-Pérez, 2016; Pham, Tučková, & Jabbour, 2019). Especially, HRM practices through investing in employee development via training to acquire knowledge, skills, and behaviours have a great effect on fostering employee IM (Kuvaas & Dysvik, 2009; Larson & Rusk, 2011).

Moreover, better HRM practices produce favourable workplaces such as healthy, interesting, and enjoyable work conditions, result in employees with high IM (Gagné & Deci, 2005; Kuvaas & Dysvik, 2010; Minbaeva, 2008). Also, it was confirmed that employees with high IM are ready to exert extra effort to perform extra tasks and engage in voluntary work for the organization's sake (Zapata-Phelan, Colquitt, Scott, & Livingston, 2009; Zhang & Bartol, 2010) because intrinsically motivated employees have a high emotional organizational commitment to remain in their workplace (Galletta et al., 2011; Hayati & Caniago, 2012; Thatcher et al., 2006). Accordingly, HRM practices aim to produce employees with high IM and this kind of motivation strengthens the bond between the employees and their organization diminishing their intention to leave greatly.

## **Conclusion**

The issue of employee turnover is still a present problem facing the hoteliers in the hospitality industry because employee turnover had hinged negative impacts on this industry. That pushes scholars to discover the factors that can solve this issue and what are the mechanisms that can support these factors in order to decrease employee turnover. Thus, the current paper is an attempt aiming to fill the gap in the literature of HRM practices and employee TI. Drawing on the social exchange theory and empirical studies, the present paper theoretically highlighted that employee IM may mediate the association between HRM practices and employee TI.

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